

arts & leisure

Television, Radio, Advice, Music

A Review

Summer Flops: A Critic's List

By ALLEN H. JOHNSON
Executive Editor

If you peddle entertainment, summer is a good time to sell your wares. The kids are out of school, the days are longer, and even rational adults worry themselves to a frazzle in the eternal quest for The Good Time.

Thus, the movie companies and amusement parks and record companies and everyone else who wants to make a quick buck inundate us with new releases or, in the case of the amusement parks, bigger, scarier rides that already gave this writer motion sickness in their tamer versions last summer.

Unfortunately, many of those efforts wind up being flops, either financially or critically or both.

Following is my list of some of the summer's larger disappointments:

"Superman III": This movie succeeds admirably at being boring, silly and disjointed all at the same time. Unlike the previous Superman movies, it's a chore to watch and fails miserably at involving the audience emotionally, as crowd-pleasing movies are supposed to do.

Even more tragically, the movie wastes the comic genius of Richard Pryor, who (although he is cast as a computer genius) comes across as a bumbling, lazy, wide-eyed buffoon reminiscent of the days of Stepin Fetchit.

I pray that this is the last Superman movie. If it isn't, I vow to order a batch of Kryptonite from Sears and Roebuck.

"Twilight Zone: The Movie": There are many problems with this dressed-up tribute to the old, low-budget TV series, which still has a cult following in syndication (it airs locally on Channel 26).

First and foremost is that it loses the whole spirit of what the late Rod Serling did in the original series, using too many fancy special effects (which the show never had, and therefore was forced to rely on plot and imagination) and stretching short stories to unbearable lengths.

A revival in black and white, following the format of the show, would have been a delight. But Producer Steven Spielberg loves to deal in excess.

"Octopussy": This James Bond flick starring Roger Moore is predictable, dumb, and about as palatable to adult tastes as a "Space Ghost" cartoon. It mixes comedy, suspense and action, but is neither funny, suspenseful nor exciting.

What happened to the good old days, when Sean Connery played Bond? We'll find out this fall, when Connery returns to the role in "Never Say Never Again."

It's got to be an improvement.

Next week: A look at summer music.



Center Of Attention

Eddie Murphy has been stirring quite a bit of interest lately, not only among these ladies of the evening in "48 Hours," but with a fat contract with Paramount Pictures that guarantees his wealth.

Broadway Is My Beat

Murphy Becomes A Hollywood 'Bonus Baby'

By JOEY SASSO
Syndicated Columnist

Observations in covering the night beat: Paramount Pictures is gloating that it signed Eddie Murphy to a \$15 million deal for five films. But there's more to that deal than meets the eye. *The People Page* learned exclusively that Eddie, who is only 22 and already the hottest pistol in TV and movies, also obtained the biggest personal service deal in movie history. All the new money will help Murphy pay off the mortgage on his new estate in Alpine, N.J., and do a lot of little things for his folks who still reside on Long Island.

The big deal has never been made public, but Eddie got \$4 million in cold cash in advance. This

makes him the first bonus baby in moviedom, topping the superstar jocks like Herschel Walker, whose multimillion-dollar deal with the New Jersey Generals doesn't even come near what Eddie got.

What can Cool Eddie do with \$4 million in cash? Well, explained a business associate yesterday, he could put it in the bank, invest it in Treasury notes, tax-free municipal bonds or anything else. And after he makes the five pictures, he would have earned enough interest to retire at age 23! That's why, in gratitude, he went back to the Comedy Strip to do two nights of stand-up routines recently. Though the little spot couldn't afford to pay Eddie's prices, it didn't have to. You see, he got his first break at the Strip,

a long, long time ago. Eddie's not crazy. He's grateful ...

In a recent interview, Muhammad Ali said he is bored living in luxury and is considering the sale of his mansion home in Los Angeles. "I'm thinking of leaving all this and buying a little three-bedroom house," the former world heavyweight champion told the *London Daily Star*. "I have seven children but there are only the four of us together now, counting my wife." Ali was quoted as saying: "I get tired of living in luxury. When you live in luxury, you have to tip the cook a thousand dollars, you have to tip the gardener a thousand. You just sit here getting fat and lazy. You should be out there in the kitchen doing the

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Musical Notes

The 'Maestro' Will Sing Gospel In Israel While Gaye Will Appear In Greensboro Soon

Barry White will be bringing a message of love to the Holy Land in late August when he performs and co-hosts the first annual "One Nation Under God" gospel festival in Israel.

The concert also will feature the Rev. James Cleveland, Andrae Crouch, Shirley Caesar and the Southern California Community Choir.

Co-organized by White and his Unlimited Gold label President Rod McGrew with the Holy Land Pilgrimage Foundation, the festival is set for Aug. 21 at Sultan's Pools in Jerusalem and Aug. 23 and 24 at the Roman Theatre in Caesarea. Though White was a choir director in church in his early days, this marks the first time in his professional career he will perform gospel music.

"A mass of people from the U.S., of all religions and colors, will be going to the Holy Land to experience that which they've only known through gospel music and the Bible," says McGrew. "It's a pilgrimage in the name of peace, love and oneness of

people."

Gaye To Appeal

Marvin Gaye and special guest Steve Arrington will appear in concert at the Greensboro Coliseum Saturday, July 23, at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$11.50 and \$10.50 and are now on sale at the Coliseum Box Office and all Ticketron outlets, including Sears locations, Reznick's in Winston-Salem and Belk at the Carolina Circle Mall in Greensboro.

Gaye's album "Midnight Love" has put him back on the *Billboard* charts and the first single release from that album, "Sexual Healing," has been extremely successful.

For the first time since he started recording, Gaye plays most of the instruments, including drums, synthesizers, piano, organ, vibes, orchestra bells and percussion. He also does 95 percent of his own background voices and choruses.

Arrington's current album, "Steve Arrington's

Hall Of Fame," is fast rising on the *Billboard* Rhythm Blues chart.

'Tell Your Friends'

Multi-platinum singer/songwriter producer Luther Vandross recently took time off from producing Dionne Warwick's upcoming LP to be fitted for a tuxedo by famed designer Bob Mackie.

When Luther stepped into Mackie's salon, he discovered that he was sharing the costumer's attention with a blonde being fitted for a new dress -- Joan Rivers.

As Vandross stood in front of the mirrors while Mackie's tailor pinned and chalked his garment, he heard the rustling sound of Rivers stripping down to her slip in the next dressing room. Then Vandross heard the comedienne tell Mackie's assistant in no uncertain terms, "Just make sure you tell your friends I've got a body like Raquel Welch."



Barry White will perform gospel music for the first time in a Holy Land concert in August.

Ask Yolonda

Simply Because He Isn't 'Macho' He Doesn't Have To Be Gay

By YOLONDA GAYLES
Syndicated Columnist

Dear Yolonda: By a strange set of circumstances, I met a nice guy. Because we were thrown together a lot, we became good friends, and eventually lovers. Now, we're engaged to get married.

But I have a real problem: he's a rather feminine-type man. He's not gay, nor has he ever been -- or so he tells me -- but you wouldn't know that by looking at him. He's so feminine-looking. Some people tell me that he's more feminine than I am.

Recently, he's gotten the new curly look, and that really makes matters worse. He seems to constantly be heading to the shop to get something done to his hair, or he walks around in that ridiculous plastic bag. On top of all this, his dress is meticulous.



Y. Gayles

And his voice is about three octaves higher than mine.

People tease us about this all the time. My friends and family are the worst. They get a big laugh out of us, telling me that, as time goes on, I'm getting more masculine and he's becoming more feminine.

In a way, I can see what they're talking about. I'm constantly on him about his feminine ways.

Basically, though, my friend is quite a man. He's a good lover and a nice provider. The only thing is the way he acts. I get the impression that, later in life, he might turn out to be homosexual.

I'd like your opinion on this. Marry him or not?
Tonia

Dear Tonia: If you look around, you'll find many men with the characteristics you describe. That doesn't mean that they're less manly, or potentially homosexual.

We each have our own characteristics; you're entitled to yours and he's entitled to his. Base your decision to marry him on whether or not you can love him as he is.

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